

REMARKS

Claims 23-41 are in the application. They replace claims 1-22 which have been deleted.

The specification has been amended to insert appropriate headings and to delete references to the claims.

Concerning the objection to the drawing, the Examiner will note that claim 18 has been deleted.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, are respectfully requested.

The Examiner will note that the claims as rewritten overcome the problems pointed out in the office action.

The claims and features which do not have support in the specification have been cancelled.

With respect to the "engaging keys" of original claim 12 (now claim 33), it is respectfully pointed out that support for this feature can be found in line 3 of page 7 of

the specification.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 900,607 and further in view of Nakanori et al., are also respectfully requested.

As a result of the foregoing amendment, the claims have been distinguished over the references of record.

Specifically, it has been made clear in independent claim 23 that each casting roller casing is supported at least on both ends thereof through support elements on the stationary axle.

The feature originally contained in claim 1 that the support elements protrude into the casing is now set forth in new claim 24.

Applicants respectfully submit that the references relied on by the Examiner do not disclose or suggest the strip casting machine as it is now set forth in claim 23 of the application.

The casting roller according to the reference EP '607 also has a stationary axle. However, only one intermediate ring (support element 10) is provided, as seen in the drawing and mentioned in the specification, column 3, lines 41-43 and 53-55. In addition, the roller or shell 6 is on the side facing away from this intermediate ring connected integrally to a component. Consequently, this casting roll is very complicated and, therefore, expensive to manufacture. In accordance with the invention, the casting roller is constructed as a cylindrical casing; this means that the roller, which has to be replaced frequently, can be more easily manufactured.

Another difference over EP '607 is the fact that the support elements according to the present invention are rotatable, and that one of the support elements is drivable. Consequently, together with the feature of at least two support elements on both sides, altogether three significant structural differences exist between the casting roller of the present application and the casting roller of the reference. It is submitted that these three differences mean that the present invention is patentable over the art of record.

The Examiner has cited the reference to Nakanori as showing bearing journals. However, applicants respectfully submit that this is not correct. Clearly, the reference to Nakanori does not disclose a cylindrical casing which is separate from the remaining axle.

Accordingly, it is submitted that, for the reasons set forth above, the claims of the present application are patentable over the art of record.

Therefore, in view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance and such allowance is respectfully solicited.

Any additional fees or charges required at this time in connection with the application may be charged to Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 11-1835.

Respectfully submitted,
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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on August 12, 2003.

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